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An Apostolate of the  
Society of Jesus under the  
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**This document is intended as a guideline for those promoting the Pioneer Association within the schools. It contains the core content that should be covered within a talk and the main ideas to be discussed within each theme. It should be adapted to the age and educational development of the group been addressed. The presenter has the scope to use whatever resources that facilitate in the delivery of a presentation.**

## **Schools Presentation Guidelines**

### **Introduction**

- Pioneer Motivation – Motivation is rooted in love of God and love of neighbour
- Who are Pioneers and why do we abstain from alcohol? Explain our motivation - to help those caught up in addiction. How? Through the means of prayer and sacrifice.
- Does our country have a major problem with alcohol? Do you want to help improve the situation? Listen to what we have to offer.
- Our message – off drugs for life, off alcohol until 18.
- We need to change our attitudes – in order to change our behaviours – e.g. purpose of a pub is to socialise not to get drunk
- My talk is designed to help you develop the right attitude, to help you develop your character so that you get the best out of life.
- If a person does not understand the motivation for being a pioneer, it will be difficult to keep the commitment required
- In order to explain the motivation, one has to comprehend the complexity of an alcohol/drug addiction
- Ultimately an addicted person loses his/her freedom to say no – Pioneers essentially pray and make a sacrifice for their freedom and well-being.

### ***Where does the Pioneer Association fit in?***

- Our main purpose is to help those who are addicted to regain their freedom by saying “no” to alcohol. In that way they are able to take control of their lives once more. Unfortunately, through their addiction, they are enslaved. The alcohol/drug dominates them and prevents them from living a normal life.

### **How?**

- We turn to God on their behalf in providing the solution.
- Belief in God requires faith – Do you believe in God? Do you believe in miracles?
- Only God can perform miracles but we can co-operate with Him by our efforts.

- God's grace and human effort can go a long way!
- e.g If someone you love was really sick and medical science could do nothing for that person – what would you do? – Experience shows that many tend to turn to God and pray for help.
- Likewise, we in the Pioneers abstain out of love for those addicted. We pray to God to help the addicted. True love always involves sacrifice. It costs us something. That's the nature of love. So Pioneers freely choose to abstain from the pleasure derived from alcohol for the welfare of others.
- We ask God to bestow a grace which only He can grant. But He needs our help and co-operation.
- How can you help? Will you make a commitment to stay off alcohol until 18, and offer that sacrifice up to God as a prayer for those who are addicted as well as preparing yourself for a wise choice on the threshold of adulthood?

### **Impact of alcohol abuse on Individual**

- Underage drinking can impact on health. The human body does not fully develop until eighteen. Potential stunting of physical growth can occur.
- It has an impact on other areas such as educational performance. It can lead to lost opportunities such as missing out on going to college and realising one's full potential in life.

### **Impact of alcohol abuse on Family –**

- It can lead to marital breakdown. 40% of cases are attributed to alcohol abuse.
- e.g. relate story of someone you know who drinks too much and its impact on marriage
- Can you prevent the cycle from been repeated in your life? Depends on your response today and over the coming years. Think before you act.
- Developing habits – mixture of good/bad – eradicate the bad and develop the good ones
- How do we get rid of bad habits – prayer, willpower, discipline, constant practice, hard work, perseverance, conviction, courage etc
- Setting an example – be a positive witness to those around you – be a leader in this regard
- E.g. of younger brother/sister – Would you like to see younger brother/sister drunk – No. Why, because they themselves have experienced the pitfalls and are aware of the dangers. They know the risky behaviours that their younger sibling would engage in.

### **Pursuit of Freedom and Happiness**

- Everyone wants to be happy. Not everyone finds it in the right places.
- Freedom is found not in the abuse of our gifts but in their proper use.
- E.g. purpose of a pen is to write but it can be misused and used as a deadly weapon
- Likewise with the gift of our freedom. We can choose to be/do good or bad.
- In relation to Alcohol, it is a gift from God. There is nothing wrong with alcohol per se. It's proper use is in moderation by adults.
- If we misuse the gift we can become enslaved. This ultimately means loss of freedom.

### **Importance of Pledge/Promise - Commitment**

- Always remind ourselves why we have taken the pledge –(loving God and loving others) - helps to keep us focused
- Who are we making a commitment to – God, Family, Ourselves
- What's another word for a pledge – promise/vow/commitment
- What does commitment mean – something we make on a Monday and break on a Friday?
- Understand the nature and meaning of commitment – you keep it irrespective of how you feel on a given day. Our emotions/feelings can fluctuate up and down in a 24 hr period. A commitment that is kept proves our sincerity and proves that we can keep our word.

- Being faithful to one's promise demonstrates that you are trustworthy and a person of your word. Keeping the small commitments in life will enable you to keep the bigger commitments as and when they arise.

### **Moral Truths (importance of values)**

- Is getting drunk morally right or wrong (Objective truth vs Relativism)
- Always respect the truth and seek to live it out in your lives
- Dignity of the Human Person – Made in God's image and likeness
- We resemble God in our intellect, free will, conscience and our immortal soul
- Difference between person and animal – animal operates from instinct. Human beings are not merely instinctual but have been given many gifts such as intellect and free will.
- A person is called to holiness. We should use our gifts to achieve that goal.
- Drunkenness is wrong – because it impacts upon our intellect and can affect our freedom. Our ability to make proper decisions is affected. Essentially, a drunk person is not in control.

### **Reasons why you would get drunk?**

- Peer Pressure, Depression, Stress, Craic, Taste, Boredom, nothing else to do, low self-esteem, gives confidence
- Are they really good reasons to do it?
- What would you call these reasons - Excuses

### **Developing Character**

- Becoming a Pioneer until eighteen, will help to forge your character and provide you with an opportunity to learn how to handle peer pressure in a positive way.
- Strong/Weak Character – Give examples of these two types of people
- Ask them what type of person would they like to become
- How would they go about developing their character – resisting negative peer pressure is one such way
- Example of a person with a strong character – Someone who is disciplined, possesses willpower, perseveres, courageous, faithful to their commitments, etc
- This is the type of person we would like to be – taking the pledge and living out the commitments until 18 can help develop these characteristics

### **Pioneer rules**

- To abstain from alcohol until 18, off drugs for life
- To wear the pioneer pin
- To recite the pioneer prayer daily
- Recite the Pioneer Prayer and explain its constituent parts.

### **How to keep this commitment?**

- A great help in living out this commitment is developing a relationship with God. It is this relationship with God that sustains and nourishes your commitment.
- How do you get to know Jesus? – by spending time with him and frequenting the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist.
- He will help you through the good and bad days